

THE MUSIC OF A LUNDA KALENDI

by

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In the last issue of the Journal I gave some details of an eight-keyed Lunda Kalendi with the tuning and the harmonic framework of the music.

Since then I have been able to write down the variations.

The first of these is very simple. It consists of the addition of high C as an ornamental note on the second half of each crotchet beat starting from the first complete bar. Both chordal structures are treated in this way with delightful effect. The stems of the ornamental notes are upwards to distinguish them from the chordal basis.



Fig. I

Another simple variation gives the notes of one of the harmonies played alternately, with the ornamental C as the last semiquaver.



Fig. II

The first half of the chordal basis, only, is given here as the pattern for the second half is exactly the same.

The third variation shows a further spreading out of the chords and use of the ornamental C.



Fig. III

In the fourth variation two interesting cadential figures make their appearance.



Fig. IV

These are marked (a) and (b).

The final variation is much longer and apart from the opening chords maintains the decorative semiquaver figures throughout.

The essential principles of musical form, i.e. variety and repetition are present on a



Fig. V

small scale but, when the African musician is charmed by a melody he tends to be unduly repetitive and this is so, here. There is very little variety.

The overall scheme, however, is not vague and rambling as might be supposed since kalimba players often play according to the mood of the moment. It falls into a very definite pattern as shown below:

| | | | | |
|----|------|------|---|-----------------------------|
| a | b | c.r. | l | a = phrase 1 |
| b | c.r. | l | b | b = phrase 2 |
| :a | b: | c.r. | l | c.r. = cadential repetition |
| b | c.r. | l | b | l = link |
| :a | b: | | | |

It is rather curious that the cadential repetition occurs everywhere but at the end of the piece. This may have been an omission, however. I have not had a chance to check this with the player.

The section which I have called a link could equally well be described as a repetition of the cadence of phrase (a) in which case we have phrase (a) followed by phrase (b) and then both cadences repeated. Terminology, however, is less important than the evidence of a definite feeling for musical construction both in the larger scheme and in the planning of smaller details. The first two phrases are a good example of the latter. The first sections of these are similar with differing cadence patterns which gives a perfect balance.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. Noah Kambidima, the owner of this kalendi who has not only spent a great deal of time helping me to write down his music but also lent me his instrument to practise upon so that I could learn to play the music myself.